

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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O R 091055Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9829

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DIRNSA IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

CINCPACAF HICKAM AFB HI

CINCSAC OFFUTT AFB NE

CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA HI

13AF CLARK AB PI/CC

13 AF UTAPAO/CV

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

UNCLAS BANGKOK 5363

USIA PASS IEA

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TAGS: MARR, MPOL, MASS, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: RTG ANNOUNCEMENT: WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL

1. FOLLOWING IS RTG ANNOUNCEMENT RELEASED MARCH 9.
 2. BEGIN TEXT IN ITS POLICY STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON MARCH 19, 1975, THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECLARED ITS INTENTION TO SEEK, THROUGH DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, THE COMPLETION OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM THAILAND WITHIN A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR. NOW THAT THE DEADLINE FOR THE COMPLE-
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TION OF THE WITHDRAWAL IS APPROACHING, THE GOVERNMENT THEREFORE

CONSIDERS IT OPPORTUNE TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC TO ENABLE THEM TO UNDERSTAND FULLY THE PRESENT SITUATION:

1. THERE HAS BEEN COOPERATION BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE MILITARY FIELD SINCE 1950, WITH THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF IMPROVING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE THAI ARMED FORCES. FOR THIS PURPOSE THE UNITED STATES HAS ASSIGNED MILITARY ADVISERS TO THAILAND FOR ITS MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. LATER, DURING 1963-1964, WHEN HOSTILITIES IN INDOCHINA BECAME INTENSIFIED, THE UNITED STATES REQUESTED AND WAS PERMITTED TO STATION MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THAILAND SOLELY FOR OPERATIONS IN INDOCHINA. THESE PERSONNEL WERE IN ADDITION TO THE MILITARY ADVISERS AND THEIR NUMBER AT ONE STAGE REACHED THE LEVEL OF 48,000 WITH SOME 600 AIRCRAFT. WITH THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT ON JANUARY 27, 1973 AND THE SUBSEQUENT U.S. CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION PROHIBITING MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA AFTER AUGUST 15, 1973, THE MISSION OF THE U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THAILAND ALSO CAME TO AN END. THE THAI GOVERNMENT AT THAT TIME INITIATED THE GRADUAL REDUCTION OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL.

2. PURSUANT TO ITS DECLARED POLICY OF MARCH 19, 1975 THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT THEN NOTIFIED THE UNITED STATES THAT IT SHOULD WITHDRAW ALL ITS MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM THAILAND BY MARCH 20, 1976. THE PROCESS OF WITHDRAWAL IS CONTINUING WITH THE LEVEL OF THESE PERSONNEL DOWN TO SOME 5,000 AT THE END OF FEBRUARY. THE LAST AMERICAN COMBAT AIRCRAFT LEFT THAILAND IN EARLY JANUARY OF THIS YEAR.

3. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT POLICY IS QUITE CLEAR IN THAT AFTER MARCH 20, 1976, WHEN U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL FORMERLY INVOLVED WITH OPERATIONS IN INDOCHINA HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN, THE ONLY U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL TO REMAIN IN THAILAND WILL BE THOSE MILITARY ADVISERS ASSIGNED TO PROGRAMS UNDER THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT OF 1950, AT PRESENT NUMBERING ABOUT 270 PERSONS. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT CERTAIN PROJECTS OF COOPERATION WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF A NUMBER OF AMERICAN TECHNICIANS AFTER THE MARCH 20 DEADLINE. THE THAI GOV-

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ERNMENT HAS CONSIDERED THE PROPOSAL AND BELIEVES THAT THERE IS POSSIBILITY FOR AGREEMENT IF IT WERE SATISFIED THAT THE PROPOSED COOPERATION WOULD NOT IMPAIR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THAILAND, WOULD NOT THREATEN OR INTERFERE WITH THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, AND WOULD ENHANCE THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THAILAND.

4. THE THAI GOVERNMENT, THEREFORE, RESPONDED TO THE U.S.

PROPOSAL ON FEBRUARY 4, 1976, BY SUGGESTING THE ADOPTION OF A SET OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES WHICH IT CONSIDERS TO BE THE NECESSARY FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES. SINCE THESE BROAD PRINCIPLES ARE PREREQUISITES TO SAFEGUARD THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF A SOVEREIGN STATE, IT IS OUR POSITION THAT UNLESS AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON THEM BEFORE MARCH 20, 1976, IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO PROCEED WITH DETAILED DISCUSSIONS ON THOSE PROJECTS OF COOPERATION. IN SUCH EVENT, THE FACILITIES AND THE TECHNICIANS WHICH THE UNITED STATES PROPOSES TO RETAIN IN THAILAND WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE WITHDRAWN, WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD TO BE DETERMINED BY THE THAI GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, IN THE EVENT THAT AGREEMENT TO THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES COULD BE OBTAINED BEFORE MARCH 20, 1976, THE THAI GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSION ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE FINALIZED WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD.

5. THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS GIVEN WITH THE VIEW TO CLARIFYING SOME ISSUES OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST REGARDING THAI-U.S. RELATIONS. IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM THAILAND REPRESENTS A COMMON DESIRE OF THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES AND SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS AN END TO THE FRUITFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. OUR PEOPLES HAVE ENJOYED A LONG HISTORY OF CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS, AND IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT COOPERATION WILL CONTINUE UNDIMINISHED WITHIN A NEW FRAMEWORK. THE THAI GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO REGARD THE UNITED STATES AS A GOOD FRIEND AND IS CONFIDENT THAT THEIR FUTURE COOPERATION IN ALL FIELDS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTHENING OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIP.

END TEXT

3. COMMENT FOLLOWS SEPTEL.

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